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ABSTRACT

Rural Arizona libraries received a severe blow when the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center closed because of lack of funds. No northeastern Arizona libraries have been invited to join a new Arizona database, which is a spin-off of OCLC, and none of these rural libraries are in OCLC. The libraries will also have to pay long distance and user fees to access the system. In response, the Navajo County Library Consortium, which represents 77 libraries in one of the two counties in northeastern Arizona, is developing strategies for filling the gap created by the loss of interlibrary loan services. A system to interconnect the libraries and their catalogs is being investigated, and the libraries are pooling their periodical resources. Apache County, the other county in northeast Arizona, has been invited to join this network. The strong, area-wide library community, which has been created by Northland Pioneer College's library/media technology program, will continue to seek solutions. Recognizing that the development of marketing and advocacy programs that involve library patrons are essential to the effort to preserve and expand library services in this rural area, the consortium has already taken several steps toward implementing such programs. (Contains 19 references.) (KRN)

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UPWARD AND ONWARD: AN ORIGINAL APPROACH TO THE CONTINUANCE OF INTER-LIBRARY LOANS IN RURAL, NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE ARIZONA INTER-LIBRARY LOAN CENTER

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UPWARD AND ONWARD: AN ORIGINAL APPROACH TO THE CONTINUANCE OF INTER-LIBRARY LOANS IN RURAL NORTHEASTERN, ARIZONA AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE ARIZONA INTER-LIBRARY LOAN CENTER

Arizona libraries received a severe blow in the spring of 1992. The Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center, which has been funded with Library Services and Constuction Act Title III federal funding announced its closure on September 30, 1992. Title III is the inter-library cooperation portion of Library Services and Construction Act federal funding. Of all of the Title III projects through the years, the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center project funding has been the most successful on a statewide basis because it has assured Arizona residents equal access to inter-library loan materials, wherever they live. This project has been especially beneficial to residents in rural communities because the library resources customarily available in urban areas are not generally available in rural environments. With a bleak economic picture, more and more libraries have had to depend on inter-library loan sources to fill patron requests.

In an effort to keep inter-library loan services going, the Arizona State Department of Library and Archives has announced a stop gap measure, which will eventually create an statewide database of Arizona owned materials. An effort is being made to include libraries in rural areas. The Arizona database will be a spinoff of the nationwide OCLC database. Arizona libraries already on OCLC have been asked

if their records can be used in the Arizona spinoff. While several libraries have agreed to let their records be used, not all Arizona OCLC libraries have agreed to participate. This system has several flaws in it for Northeastern Arizona libraries. First, no Northeastern Arizona library has been invited to join in this system, and no Northeastern Arizona library is on OCLC. Second, to access the system, long distance and user fees will apply. Previously, these charges were paid by the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center using grant funding.

Libraries in Navajo and Apache Counties, those counties comprising Northeastern Arizona have been very good in developing cooperative strategies. The Navajo County Library Consortium is a consortium of 77 member libraries in Navajo County. The consortium includes school, special, public and community college libraries. Grant funding has provided fax machines in key libraries in this area. When the funding ran out for supplies, the libraries quickly picked up supply costs. Telephone charges for fax messages have always been the responsiblity of the libraries with the machines, and this has not been a problem. A system of interconnecting the libraries and their catalogs is currently being investigated. As of this writing, several libraries are in the process of being automated. We are currently investigating grant resources outside of the federal government for assistance in automating these libraries. A system to interconnect these libraries is

badly needed. Toll free electronic mail would help the libraries communicate immensely.

One recent study discovered that more than 500 periodical subscriptions are available in Navajo County libraries alone, with 75% of these titles being unique in that only one library in the county subscribes to the title. Many area libraries agreed to subscribe to at least one unique title so that this database could be enlarged. The libraries also agreed to photocopy requests from the unique title for other libraries. Photocopying between libraries is done without charge, with the lending library assuming the cost of the photocopying. Apache County has been invited to participate in these efforts, and some of the Apache County libraries are included in the Directory of Serials which is produced annually by the Navajo County Library Consortium for its member libraries.

Innovative technology is in the embryo stage in both Navajo and Apache Counties. Several libraries are without telephones, and many do not have fax machines or photocopiers. Yet, there is strong determination on the part of these libraries to be part of a system that works. Even the smallest library is willing to lend its materials to others. Northland Pioneer College, a community college serving both areas, has developed a strong library/media technology program which has provided training to individuals serving in school, public, special, and academic libraries. More than 450 individuals have taken courses.

Short term workshops are provided so that area library workers can get together for continuing education activities and to discuss problems that may arise. A tremendous sense of community has developed. While isolated in many instances, the isolation factor has diminished with individuals getting together for continuing education workshops and consortium meetings. Individuals and the libraries that they represent are eager to cooperate and share their resources.

In April of 1992, the American Library Association conducted a telephone campaign for indivduals to call for America's libraries. A toll free telephone number was made available for individuals to call in support of America's libraries. The libraries in Apache and Navajo Counties were very successful in getting patrons to call the number. A petition campaign replaced the call in campaign after National Library Week. Library patrons were informed that libraries in their area needed their help. It was pointed out that libraries could not be taken for granted. While they enhance the quality of life and provide valuable information for patrons, they cannot be placed in the same category as those services which are needed to sustain life. Even so, they are often one of the only cultural outlets in rural areas. Library patrons are being advised that it is important for them to stand up for what they feel is important in their lives. With the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center closing, it will be necessary for us to rely on

patrons to help us convince local governing bodies that library dollars are increasingly more important because federal and state dollars do not appear to be available.

When it was first announced that the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center was closing, a patron centered campaign was launched to encourage continued funding using state funds instead of federal funds. As of this writing, however, the Arizona State Department of Library and Archives does not appear ready to change its decision to keep the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center open, and state funding does not appear to be available at this time. This gives the libraries in this area the responsibility of coming up with some way to keep the inter-library loan services a vital part of the library services provided in the area. Northland Pioneer College is a community college with small libraries in ten of the communities in this two county area. The college already has an on-line catalog, which is accessable in each of these communities. Through creative grant writing, and new granting sources, a way to add other library holdings to this database will need to be explored. Another difficulty is the fact that many libraries do not have any kind of automation accessable to them, but where there is a will, there is a way. In one community, a local bank has been used as a drop off point for the public library. Patrons using banking facilities may leave their books at the bank. The librarian picks them up on a regular basis. Perhaps a library could find a

business with a computer terminal which could be used to send and receive messages, thereby making electronic mail accessable to almost every library. The Arizona Department of Education has a toll free electronic mail service called Arizona Edlink. There is an annual program charge for this service, but individual calls are made without charge. Perhaps an area business could install Arizona Edlink on one of their computers for use by the local library. The librarian would then have electronic mail available for inter-library loan and other communication purposes. Funding for the annual program, which is about $125.00 per year could be approached through donations or fund raising activities. It has become increasing apparent that if libraries are to succeed in this rural environment, it will be necessary to involve all types of patrons in the library's projected success. If a business can see that involvement with the local library may have positive results, the business will want to cooperate more fully. If a computer is used in a local business for inter-library loans, a simple bookmark advertising this may be prepared and placed in each inter-library loan item. The library patron is then encouraged to use the services provided by the business as well as the local library. A great deal of time needs to be spent to make sure that the library is continually in the public's eye. If positive things are happening at the library, more people will want to become involved. Patrons need to be continuously

rewarded for their thoughtfulness, efforts and concern in keeping library programs going. Simple thank you notes work wonders. Regular news releases and book review columns also help tremendously, particularly when the book reviews are written by the patrons themselves.

The closing of the Arizona Inter-Library Loan Center was met with disbelief and frustration at first. On the positive side, however, area librarians in Northeastern Arizona have been drawn closer together to provide constructive alternatives. Northland Pioneer College's library/media technology program stands willing to provide additional training as well as other support services until a workable alternative that works, and makes inter-library loans continuously available to area residents is brought about. Every effort will be made to include inter-library loan users in any decision making process that is brought about. Vocal patrons who have been using the service and know of its benefits will be the biggest selling agents to keep the service going.

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